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# THE KERKHOVEN Banner

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Volume 123, Issue 33



**Really... this won't hurt!**

KMS' new Sno Daze Queen Brooke Anderson looked a little apprehensive as the crown was placed on her head by Cadence Larson during Monday night's coronation. She and King Levi VanderSteldt will reign over the week's activities.

Below from left is the entire royal court: (front) Queen Brooke and King Levi; (back) Bradley Wilke, Cora Gleason, Charlie Haug, Megan Elliott, Jake Elliott, Katrina Nichols, Emery Bjork and Zoey Jorschumb.



## Routine meeting for Kerkhoven City Council

by Jordan Almen

The Kerkhoven City Council met briefly on Monday night, dealing with only a few routine matters.

The council approved four days of vacation for city maintenance manager Woody Nelson.

"I just had a question for Kim about how many applicants we've had," Thompson said, referring to the open maintenance worker position.

"I've had a couple of emailed resumes," Harkema answered, "but only one has come in to do an official application from the city and returned it." The application process closes at noon this Friday.

The city received and approved fire protection agreements from Mamre Township, Woods Township, and Louriston Township. They also approved ambulance ser-

vice contracts with Woods Township, Dublin Township, Mamre Township, and Louriston Township, as well as the City of Murdock.

Council member Naomi Baker gave a Parks and Recreation Committee update. "They want to get rolling here, and they just want to reiterate a couple things just to be clear," she said. "The prices obviously have gone up, so they sent us I think about six pictures to look at and we're supposed to pick out a couple and we'll get an updated price on them. The committee is asking if the council wants to see the final design before the purchase. It will be similar to the one we saw last summer."

"I think the parks board should be able to take care of that," said council member Andy Thorson.

"I agree, as long as there's enough room for what you

(Continued on page 5)

## Interest rates remind Treasurer Vadnais of Chubby Checker song, 'How Low Can You Go?'

by Reed Anfinson

"I don't know quite where to start," Swift County Treasurer Ron Vadnais told the County Board of Commissioners at their meeting Tuesday, February 16.

"I have been in this position for a number of years and I guess when I first came on board, the interest rate structure was in double digits to the point of it being almost loan-shark rates. Now here we are in 2021..." Vadnais said.

Vadnais was being modest when he said he had been the county's treasurer for "a number of years." He has been the county's treasurer for 38 years, serving since 1982. In June 1982, interest rates peaked 21.5 percent.

The current interest rates remind him of a line from the old "Limbo Rock" song by Chubby Checker, he said. "How low can you go?" he said with a couple commissioners joining him in the refrain from the song.

Interest rates are almost at

zero now, he said, which is very frustrating. "It's scary," Vadnais said.

When interest rates are even in the mid-single digits, they can generate hundreds of thousands of dollars in interest income for the county. Those funds then can be used to offset the need to raise taxes as they funnel into the county's various funds. Of course, when interest rates are higher, they also make it more expensive to borrow money for county projects.

As of the end of 2020, the county had \$21.7 million invested. While some of those funds are in reserves for the general operations of the county, other amounts are assigned to human services, the highway department, the county's employee healthcare plan and other areas of county operations.

While the county has a few investments earning an interest rate between 1.25 and a high of 1.9 percent, the majority are earning less than 0.50

(Continued on page 5)

## Kerkhoven Parks Committee back at planning for Centennial playground

by Jordan Almen

After nearly a whole year, the Kerkhoven Parks and Recreation Committee met last week. The group had decided to put their efforts on hold when the COVID-19 pandemic made social gatherings, and public fundraising events, dangerous. With vaccinations on the rise and warm weather approaching, the committee decided to pick things back up and make another attempt to get a play system installed at Centennial Park.

The Parks and Recreation committee began their meeting with a recap of their purpose and what they had done up until the start of the pandemic. To help guide that, they adopted a mission statement:

"The Kerkhoven Parks & Recreation Committee strives to create and maintain safe places for all residents and

visitors of our city to gather and play. We hope to offer opportunities for active, healthy lifestyles, and to foster a strong sense of community for all."

The Parks and Recreation committee discussed that they recognize the need and desire for not only a new play area at Centennial, but also renewed equipment at Pillsbury Park. As decided last year, they have decided to work in phases. Phase One will be the installation of a brand new play area which is ADA and OSHA compliant at Centennial Park. Since the area has split ownership between the city of Kerkhoven and the KMS School District, they have worked with both entities to get the project started. The city and the school also agreed to each give \$5000 to the project, which was set aside in 2019.

Phase Two will be the big-

ger project of updating Pillsbury Park. Since that is the primary park in the city, it will take significant investment to get it fully up to date.

Towards the beginning of 2020, the Parks and Recreation committee had chosen a final design and specific items for a playground at Centennial Park. The largest of those items, the main play structure, is no longer available, but the committee had gathered a handful of similar options, at a similar price, to review. They agreed to narrow down their selection by the next meeting.

In the coming weeks, the Parks and Recreation committee hopes to create a visual to share with the community. The members hope that those who live in and near Kerkhoven will stay tuned and help where they can to make this new source of fun a reality.



This mock-up of a potential playground for Kerkhoven's Centennial Park was drawn by Minnesota Wisconsin Playground.

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